

REMARKS

I. Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-54 were pending in the above-identified patent application.

Claims 4, 5, 26, 34, 53, and 54 were objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

Claims 1-3, 6-11, 14-25, 27-33, 35-42, and 45-52 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Oliver et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,845,374 (“Oliver”). Claims 12, 13, 43, and 44 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oliver in view of Shtivelman U.S. Patent No. 6,346,952.

II. Summary of Applicants’ Reply

Applicants appreciate the Examiner’s indication that claims 4, 5, 26, 34, 53, and 54 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants have amended the specification to correct minor typographical errors.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to correct an inadvertent error in the claim.

The Examiner’s claim rejections are respectfully traversed.

III. The Rejections of Independent Claims 1, 22, and 31

Applicants’ independent claims 1, 22, and 31 generally relate to transmitting recommendations (claims 1 and 31) or delivering objects identified in recommendations (claim 22) to a requester system.

As claimed, producer modules each produce a list of recommendations, the recommendations including a “confidence level.” As set forth in applicants’ specification, for

example, a “confidence level” is “indicative of the degree of trust or assurance that the particular object satisfies some established criteria” (p. 13, ll. 8-9). This confidence level is modified based on a “weighting value,” and recommendations are selected. As recited in claims 1 and 31, the modified confidence level is used as a basis for selecting one or more recommendations from the list of recommendations. The selected recommendations (claims 1 and 31), or the objects identified by the recommendations (claim 22), are transmitted or delivered to the requester system. Thus, as claimed, confidence levels are provided with lists of recommendation, the confidence levels are modified by a weighting value, and recommendations are selected from the list of recommendations.

An illustrative example of the use of confidence levels and weighting values is described in connection with applicants’ FIG. 5. As set forth in applicants’ specification, “each of the producer modules 506 produces a list 530 of initial recommendations. As shown in FIG. 5, the first element of each of the object pairs in a recommendation is an object identifier (e.g. u1) and the second element of each of the object pairs in a recommendation is the *confidence level* (e.g. 0.95)” (p. 20, ll. 7-9) (emphasis added). The confidence level included in the object pair is then modified by a weighting module by, for example, “multiplying each of the confidence levels in a list by the *weighting value* 538 associated with the producer module that produced the list” (p. 20, ll. 29-30) (emphasis added). Thus, in the illustrative example of FIG. 5, requester systems are provided with recommendations for objects or the objects themselves, based on both the degree of trust or assurance that the particular object satisfies some established criteria (e.g., as indicated by the confidence level included in the object pair) and the past performance of each producer module (e.g., as indicated by the weighting value used to modify the confidence level).

The Examiner contends that applicants' claims 1, 22, and 31, as described above, are anticipated by Oliver. Applicants respectfully disagree, and submit that Oliver does not show or suggest all the features of applicants' claims 1, 22, and 31.

Applicants maintain the arguments set forth in the Reply to Office Action filed on August 10, 2005 ("previous Reply"), and submit that the Examiner's Response to Arguments set forth on pages 21 and 22 of the Office Action still fails to provide support for the contention that Oliver anticipates applicants' claims 1, 22, and 31. For clarity, however, applicants are providing additional argument herein regarding the distinctions between applicants' claims 1, 22, and 31 and Oliver.

In stark contrast to applicants' claims, Oliver does not show or suggest either a "confidence level" or a "weighting value" as described above. In alleging that Oliver shows a "confidence level," the Examiner refers to FIG. 2 and column 4, lines 5-21 of Oliver. This portion of Oliver merely discloses that various other modules are used in conjunction with an assembly module 10 to provide a recommendation set of documents. Assembly module 10 of Oliver, however, does not provide a "confidence level" with an interest set of documents. Furthermore, FIG. 4 of Oliver, which is a flow chart of assembly module 10, also does not show or suggest that a "confidence level" is provided with the interest set of documents by assembly module 10. In addition, none of the other modules disclosed in connection with FIG. 2 of Oliver (*e.g.*, pre-processing module 30, clustering module 40, keyword extraction module 50, *etc.*) provide a "confidence level" with a list of recommendations.

Because Oliver fails to show or suggest a "confidence level," it follows that Oliver also fails to show or suggest a "weighting value" based upon which the confidence level is modified. In alleging that Oliver shows a "weighting value," the Examiner refers to column 4, lines 5-60,

and in particular to clustering module 40 of FIG. 2. Clustering module 40 of Oliver “groups the documents whose words have a high degree of similarity into clusters” (col. 4, ll. 30-31).

Nowhere in Oliver is it shown or suggested that this grouping of documents involves a “weighting value” as claimed by applicants, or the application of a weighting value to a “confidence level.” In particular, as set forth above, assembly module 10 does not even provide a confidence level with an interest set.

Thus, for at least these reasons, applicants’ independent claims 1, 22, and 31 are not anticipated by Oliver, and the Examiner’s rejections of the claims under section 102 should be withdrawn. In addition, dependent claims 2-21, 23-30, and 32-54 are allowable at least because independent claims 1, 22, and 31 are allowable. Thus, the Examiner’s rejections of these claims are moot and should also be withdrawn.

IV. Conclusion

The foregoing demonstrates that claims 1-54 are patentable. This application is therefore in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and prompt allowance are accordingly respectfully requested.

V. Authorization

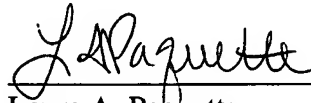
The Director is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for this Reply, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 08-0219.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Director is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby

authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 08-0219.

Respectfully submitted,
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